

A Unique Partnership

Recruiters' Backup

Remembering the Fallen

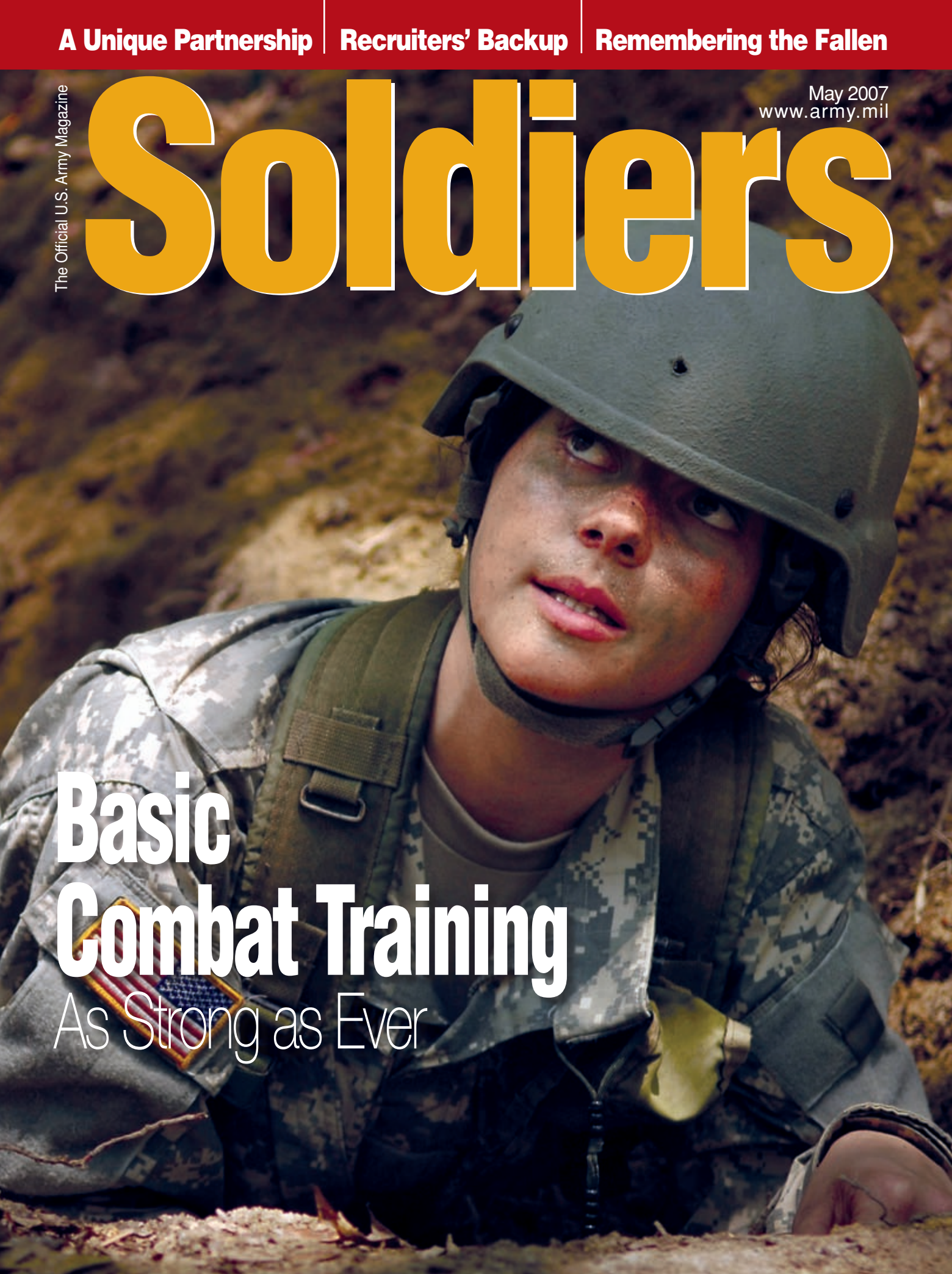
The Official U.S. Army Magazine

May 2007
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Soldiers

Basic Combat Training

As Strong as Ever





Cover Story — Page 4
A BCT Soldier checks the depth of
her fighting position during training
at Fort Jackson, S.C.
—Photo by Staff Sgt.
Tracy Pearsall, USAF

CONTE

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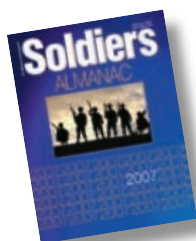
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Graphic Designer: LeRoy Jewell

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Walter Reed

Story by
SSG Christina M. O'Connell

More than 5,600 Soldiers from operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom have received world-class in-patient medical treatment at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., but many have had a different experience when it came to outpatient care. In early March, media attention brought to light several medical facilities and processes that were in need of immediate improvement, grabbing the attention of top Army officials and the rest of the nation.

Charged by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates with making immediate and long-term corrections to the leadership and systemic failures in the disability system, Acting Secretary of the Army Pete Geren has taken significant steps to bridge the gap between what the Army's wounded Soldiers deserve and what some have experienced at Walter Reed.

The two main issues recognized as unacceptable by top Army officials are the conditions of the outpatient barracks, Building 18, and the lengthy, bureaucratic process of evaluating Soldiers' disabilities. Both issues are in need of short-term fixes but, more importantly, also require long-term corrections.

Following the March disclosures, all Soldiers living in Building 18 were moved onto the WRAMC campus and into Abrams Barracks, where each room provides Soldiers with a computer, a telephone, a television and Internet access.

SSG Christina M. O'Connell works in the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs at the Pentagon.

Immediate responses also involved a new leadership chain of command at WRAMC under MG Eric Schoomaker, and included new positions created specifically to ensure Soldiers' needs are met.

As Schoomaker took command March 2, a deputy commanding general position was created and filled by combat veteran BG Michael S. Tucker, whose mission is to work on behalf of the Soldiers as the "bureaucracy buster" and ensure the outpatient system is responsive to their needs.

"We've found that in many cases this bureaucracy that's grown over the decades frustrates the very best efforts of the most dedicated public servants," said Geren. "We've got Soldiers who are fighting a war overseas, and come back and battle a bureaucracy over here. It shouldn't be that way."

The new leadership team also extends to the Wounded Warrior Brigade, commanded by COL Terrance McKendrick, created for the purpose of tracking Soldiers and ensuring each is taken care of. The squad leaders assigned to every nine Soldiers will look after those Soldiers, and make sure they are making appointments and getting needed care.

A One Stop Soldier and Family Assis-

tance Center will ensure quick and easy access to case managers, family coordinators, finance experts and representatives from key support and advocacy organizations such as the Army Wounded Warrior Program.

Two separate expert teams have been handpicked to assess major Army medical facilities' outpatient care and community-based health-care organizations for reserve-component Soldiers, an assessment that Geren says will help identify the problems that need to be corrected throughout the system.

Long-term improvements rely heavily on the new leadership team and structure, but the Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline (800-984-8523) has been established to keep problems from slipping through the cracks. The hotline allows Soldiers and their

families to directly contact the Army Operation Center and inform Army leaders of issues that need attention.

"This goes right to the heart of our commitment to Soldiers and their families," said Geren. "They've got to know that we're going to take care of

them. The American people need to know we're going to take care of them so they'll continue to have confidence in the Army, the confidence the Army deserves. And this is an important piece of it, so this will remain the primary focus for me as long as I have this job."

The **Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline** operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Stateside: (800) 984-8523
Stateside (DSN) 328-0002
Overseas: (DSN) 312 328-0002

Email support is also available at wfsupport@conus.army.mil
Include your telephone number so we may call you back.



Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline: (800) 984-8523

BASIC COMBAT TRAINING

Officials at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe, Va., have used lessons learned from war to better train new recruits, such as those undergoing basic combat training at Fort Jackson, S.C., where each year some 43,000 prospective new Soldiers undergo nine weeks of rigorous training. Other BCT posts, including Fort Benning, Fort Knox, Fort Leonard Wood and Fort Sill, also supply the Army with newly trained Soldiers.



AS PV1 Demarea Ervin tried on his Class A dress uniform, he reflected on his last six weeks of basic combat training at Fort Jackson. He'd been surprised by his own success, since he'd never before focused on physical-fitness training. He credits "good drill sergeants that push us to the limit," with making the recruits fit.

Ervin started his BCT able only to perform six push-ups and 36 sit-ups, and to run two miles in roughly 18.5 minutes. He improved his performance

SGM Larry Lane, a former *Soldiers* staffer, is sergeant major of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command public affairs office at Fort Monroe, Va.




▲ A new Soldier at Fort Jackson, S.C., winces as he undergoes a process familiar to all new recruits.

Senior Airman Desiree Palacios, USAF



Staff Sgt. Stacy Pearsall, USAF



Soldiers congratulate a team member who's just won a pugil stick competition during training at Fort Jackson.

ONG AS EVER

Story by SGM Larry Lane



to 50 push-ups, 83 sit-ups and two miles in 15.5 minutes.

Beyond the physical-fitness training success, Ervin, an aviation-supply specialist, said his drill sergeants instilled discipline.

"Many of us weren't disciplined. And many of us don't like being ordered around," said Ervin. "The drill sergeants prepared us for success in combat; they trained us to be disciplined, and that will help us if we do

Staff Sgt. Stacy Pearsall, USAF (Both)

◀ A drill sergeant provides guidance to one of his Soldiers during a hot training day.

▼ Incoming Soldiers try on boots at Fort Jackson's reception center.



BASIC COMBAT TRAINING



Staff Sgt. Stacy Pearsall, USAF

firing a rifle and passing a physical-fitness test.

One of the greatest improvements to BCT was the development of what's called a "living" training doctrine — guidance and instruction that can change quickly, based on wartime lessons

learned, Shwedo said.

If an enemy changes his method of using improvised explosive devices, for example, and that information is deemed relevant enough to be added to BCT, drill sergeants can begin teaching the new information almost immediately.

Central to this new training perspective is a list of combat skills known as "Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills" that all Soldiers, regardless of their military occupational specialties, need to perform their missions.

The list, which currently includes 40 tasks and 11 drills, is under continuous review. Every six months a team of decision-makers meets to determine whether current tasks or battle drills need to be modified or deleted.

"We were told to look at what war-rrior tasks and drills prepare a Soldier for deployment to Afghanistan and Iraq," Shwedo said about his initial guidance. Data was drawn from a number of resources, including the records of the Army's combat training centers, TRADOC's Center for Army Lessons Learned, commanders and command sergeants major from deployed units and, indirectly, from Soldiers in the field.

Soldiers now learn to load, fire and clear at least six common weapon systems, including the M-16

▲ Donning and clearing the protective mask is a task still being taught in basic combat training.

go to war. If we don't pay attention to detail in a combat area, the enemy can more easily surprise us."

As a volunteer Soldier during wartime, Ervin said he, like the other Soldiers in his BCT company, knew he could deploy to a combat zone one day. "I believe that the people in my company are content with the decisions they made."

Training Doctrine

When a Soldier graduates from BCT today, he's met the same high standards for new recruits that have always been demanded by leaders, said COL Kevin Shwedo, director of Operations, Plans and Training for the U.S. Army Accessions Command. "I want Soldiers who are disciplined, physically fit and can hit what they shoot at."

Five years of collective war in Iraq and Afghanistan have greatly shaped what Soldiers are being taught in BCT, said Shwedo, and they now graduate with a greater set of skills, far beyond

Senior Airman Desiree Palacios, USAF



▼ Soldiers face their fears on Fort Jackson's legendary Victory Tower.

BASIC COMBAT TRAINING

rifle, the MK-19 automatic grenade launcher and several machine guns. They learn battle drills that focus on urban combat, convoy ambushes and threats posed by improvised explosive devices.

Soldiers still learn common Soldiers skills, among them how to care for a casualty, but even that goes way beyond simply learning how to evaluate and treat a casualty, Shwedo said. A Soldier in BCT today learns enough about casualty care to be combat-life-saver qualified.

Adding new tasks to BCT did not come without sacrifices, Shwedo said. If tasks were merely added to the old basic-training program of instruction, a basic-training cycle might have had to be extended to about 14 weeks. Instead, more hours are added to the training day, Soldiers train all day on Saturday, and they spend more time in the field. Additionally, hours have been reclaimed from time previously spent on drill and ceremony.

The latter is still part of BCT, but

not to the extent it once was.

Another change is that Soldiers now receive their weapons within the first week of training. In what's called "weapons immersion," the recruit – now called "Soldier" before he even completes BCT – carries a rifle and a magazine loaded with blanks wherever he goes, to increase his awareness of weapons safety and responsibility.

"Every Soldier understands that the only acceptable weapon discharge outside of marksmanship training or competition is the one that occurs when he is deliberately aiming at a person and pulling the trigger," Shwedo said. "Any other discharge is a negligent discharge."

An important focus of BCT is

- Soldiers move down a road on the way to a patrolling mission.
- ▼ A drill sergeant coaches a Soldier during qualification on the M-2 machine gun. Soldiers undergoing BCT now qualify on a variety of common Army weapons.

to train Soldiers as they will fight, Shwedo said. Because they'll rarely fire a weapon from a foxhole, drill sergeants focus on teaching Soldiers to fire weapons from standing and kneeling positions. Soldiers also perform weapons qualifications while wearing individual body armor.



Staff Sgt. Stacy Pearsall, USAF



Senior Airman Desiree Palacios, USAF

“Every Soldier going into the fight today wears the IBA, so why would we be any less restrictive at BCT?” Shwedo said.

Shwedo said the training doctrine that drives what Soldiers are taught at BCT has to continue to be a living doctrine that can be adjusted to compensate for new threats at the same time it meets the requirements driven by potential emerging threats.

“To let training go stale would be unconscionable,” he said. “If something came out of theater tomorrow that would save a single Soldier’s life, we would have an implementation strategy out before we left that duty day.”

Training the Force

COL Kenneth Strickland, commander of the 165th Infantry Brigade at Fort Jackson, is one of the leaders tasked to incorporate BCT changes. The nine weeks of training are packed, he said. There is no longer time to “paint rocks white” and “spit-shine boots,” basic training mainstays from bygone years.

Every training minute has to be based on providing the operational force with the best-trained Soldiers, those with skills to help them survive in combat, Strickland said.

To help provide as much training beforehand as possible, Strickland’s brigade created a permanent “forward-operating base” to support a final seven-day, field-training exercise called “Victory Forge.” The FOB helps teach Soldiers how to deploy to a forward position and conduct missions from the site.

➤ Soldiers learn teamwork by assisting each other in climbing a tower obstacle at Fort Jackson.

Staff Sgt. Stacy Pearsall, USAF





Staff Sgt. Dennis Henry, USAF

▲ Soldiers negotiate yet another obstacle during training at Fort Jackson.

“You eat, sleep, do pre-combat inspections, rehearse and conduct operations,” Strickland said. “The people who were your drill sergeants are now your squad leaders and platoon sergeants and are leading Soldiers on missions.”

This is the first time the trainees experience the NCO leadership they’ll have in their first units of assignment, Strickland said.

Drill Sergeants Out Front

SGT Jeremiah Reynolds, a drill sergeant with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 13th Inf. Regiment, 193rd Inf. Bde., underwent basic training in 2002. As an artilleryman, Reynolds went through standard lane training in Kuwait, just before crossing the border into Iraq with the 1st Cavalry Div. Through lane training, Soldiers are tested at numbered stations, which basically consist of a table and an NCO teaching a skill at each.

“Most of what we teach now are the skills I was taught when I was over in Kuwait — training up and getting ready to head across the border,” said Reynolds, who’s been a drill sergeant for a little more than a year and has received e-mails from Soldiers now deployed who were in his early training cycles.

“They are either getting ready to deploy or are already over there,” Reynolds said. “Most of them write something like, ‘Drill sergeant, just wanted to let you know we’re doing OK, and we appreciate everything you did.’”

Drill sergeant SFC Erika Rhine-Russell deployed with the 3rd Inf. Div. to Iraq, where she experienced a couple of ambushes. She said she’s always thinking about the skills she wants to teach new Soldiers, so they’ll survive and be able to perform their missions successfully if they’re caught in similar situations.

The ever-evolving changes to BCT require drill sergeants to always stay ahead to master the new tasks, Rhine-Russell said.

“I’m something of a perfectionist; I want to make sure I give everything that I can give,” she added. “I know the Soldiers are going to rely on what I’m teaching them to help them be successful when they leave here.”

Results of Training

After six weeks of training, PV1 Andre Sample, a light-wheeled-vehicle mechanic, said he especially enjoyed the night his platoon got to fire tracers into the darkness.

“I thought that was the best thing we did. It looked like lasers from the ‘Star Wars’ movies, and I thought that was so amazing. I wanted to join the infantry right after I saw that,” he said.

As a high school student, Sample enjoyed working on computers. Now qualified as an expert rifleman, he said he looked forward to more weapons training. He’s considered the possibilities of deploying to combat and feels he’s ready if that day comes.

“I’m aware of the responsibilities,” he said. “And I’m ready to step up and do what I have to do for my country.” 🇺🇸

Training for the FIGHT

Story and Photos by SGM Larry Lane

When the trucks turned a corner, the shooters on the driver's side scanned the brown terrain that was cluttered with burned-out vehicles, rubble and gutted structures...

TWO 5-ton Army trucks rolled through the Anzio Mounted Combat Patrol Complex, their oversize tires kicking up the thick red clay of Fort Jackson, S.C. Squads of basic combat training Soldiers were lined up in the back of the trucks — seven on the driver's side, seven on the passenger's side — conducting a simulated mounted-combat patrol.

Between the two lines of Soldiers, drill sergeants, two for each truck, gave orders for the shooters to lock and load their rifles' magazines. When the trucks turned a corner, the shooters on the driver's side scanned the brown terrain that was cluttered with burned-out vehicles, rubble and gutted

structures, a scene reminiscent of areas of Iraq.

Green pop-up targets rose from the terrain, and the Soldiers fired rounds to try to knock down the "enemy troops."

The patrol "survived" two simulated ambushes only to be hit by an improvised explosive device in a mock urban environment. The Soldiers sprang from the vehicles and took positions behind

walls, wrecked vehicles and whatever solid barriers they could find. Then they engaged the enemy targets.

Within minutes a quick-reaction force arrived to assist. The QRF riflemen and an M-249 squad-automatic weapon provided suppressive fire. Once the ambush was contained, the Soldiers cleared their weapons and moved off the range.

► With blank-firing adapters still fixed to the muzzles of their weapons, BCT Soldiers at Fort Jackson practice for a later convoy live-fire exercise as their drill sergeants (*standing*) run through the commands.



BASIC COMBAT TRAINING

The Soldiers of the 165th Infantry Brigade's Company E, 3rd Battalion, 34th Inf. Regiment, then swapped roles to get the experience of both the mounted patrol mission and the QRF.

"When I deployed to Iraq, we didn't get any of this stuff. I didn't know what an IED was," said SFC Michael Carter, a drill sergeant who deployed to Iraq with the 4th Inf. Division. Many of today's drill sergeants now wear patches denoting their combat tour, and many are familiar with IEDs and ambushes.

"I like this range because we're simulating what Soldiers will likely be doing in Iraq," said Carter. "It's probably the best and most realistic training we do out here."

No question it's critical, given the fact that "within a year, some of these guys will be in a combat zone. Some of the Soldiers who come through here will tell you later that most of the training they got was here at BCT," Carter said.

▼ Soldiers roll through the convoy live-fire range during the familiarization dry run.

"It's important that everybody gets this training, because we're not flying to every outpost," said SFC Mark Harris, a drill sergeant with both infantry and air traffic-controller qualifications.

Harris, who served in Operation Just Cause in Panama and has served in both Iraq and Afghanistan, said there is a good possibility that many of the Soldiers will become part of a convoy operation.

There are numerous bases in Iraq and Afghanistan. Usually, the only way to get to them is along a convoy route, Harris said. "It's beneficial for every Soldier to know the procedure on how to react to an ambush or defend himself in an IED attack."

From most accounts, the Soldiers in training do understand the importance of learning how to react during a convoy ambush.

Automated logistics specialist PV2 Herschell Epps said he knows how live-fire convoy training can help him prepare for a potential deployment to Iraq.



▲ Soldiers take cover behind walls after being "ambushed" on the live-fire convoy range.

"I've heard as a logistics specialist that we're going to be re-supplying things like rifle magazines and weapons," he said. "I figure the enemy will try to blow that stuff up before we even supply the infantrymen. So I take this training to heart."

PV1 James Harper, a light-wheeled mechanic, said he probably shot more vehicles than targets, but the training was fun and the fact that drill sergeants shared their stories added weight to the instruction.

The live-fire convoy range is one of the major training events during a weeklong field-training exercise called Victory Forge. 🇺🇸





▲ Soldiers clear a building within a MOUT training facility at Fort Jackson.

Learning the URBAN FIGHT

Story by SGM Larry Lane

THE Muslim call to prayer reverberated throughout the mock Iraqi village of Al-Dawar as two platoons of Soldiers waited in their positions in the nearby woods.

Drill sergeants, who served as team leaders, passed orders to squad leaders to update their Soldiers on the upcoming mission to search the village.

One squad would meet with the village headman, who had been seen

walking through the village with another man who toted an assault rifle. It was hard to tell if the man with the weapon was part of a protection detail or if he was holding the elder hostage.

The five-member squad moved into the village and toward the two Soldiers portraying Iraqis. As the rest of the patrol waited in the woods and provided cover, a second platoon supported the operation from an area of the woods overlooking the village.

As the rest of the patrol waited in the woods and provided cover, a second platoon supported the operation from an area of the woods.



▲ Soldiers are confronted by a “village elder” and another role-player.

◀ Soldiers evacuate one of their “wounded” team members from a two-story building.



Through an Army translator, the squad leader told the two Iraqi role-players that the village would be searched for weapons and materials for making improvised explosive devices, or for enemy soldiers hidden inside the buildings.

After answering a few questions, the two men turned and walked away, as if they were about to lead the squad through the village. But something was wrong. The man with the assault rifle suddenly pointed his weapon in a threatening manner, prompting the Soldier to order him to drop it.

But the man ignored the order and

BASIC COMBAT TRAINING

The platoon that was covering the squad raced in to provide support and began the more complex operation of clearing each building.

turned the weapon toward the squad, then “fired” a few rounds, “hitting” one Soldier in the leg. Another Soldier “killed” the assailant, which seemed to initiate more enemy rifle fire from nearby buildings.

The platoon that was covering the squad raced in to provide support and began the more complex operation of clearing each building.

The military-operations-on-urbanized-terrain training site at Fort Jackson is made up of several one- and

two-story buildings, vehicles and other obstacles.

Soldiers moved house-to-house to clear the village, while taking “fire” from an illusive “enemy.” Squad leaders made quick decisions and issued orders, then cleared the village, while smoke obscured the operation and grenade simulators shook the buildings.

In one building, Soldiers were met by two role-players portraying frightened, unarmed villagers; in another, they engaged the “enemy.” Soldiers performed simulated first aid, evacuated the “wounded” and searched for information. The latter quest netted a

map coordinate identifying a weapons cache.

This MOUT training was one of the final challenges of Exercise Victory Forge for the 165th Infantry Brigade’s Company E, 3rd Battalion, 34th Inf. Regiment.

“Basic combat training has become more mission-oriented on Iraq”, said SFC Michael Holland, a drill sergeant and infantryman who deployed to Iraq with the 1st Cavalry Division. “It’s important that the Soldiers we train are exposed to realistic training situations that replicate events they could actually face in a combat zone.”

▼ Soldiers carry a “wounded insurgent” to a rear area to provide care and search him for information.





Recruiters' Backup

Story by Mary Kate Chambers

SRAPs bring their real-world war experiences to prospective recruits, lending credibility to what they tell potential enlistees.

IN OCTOBER, SGT Jason Maxwell wasn't too sure about being selected by Army officials for recruiting duty. But since joining the Special Recruiter Assistance Program, he's feeling better about it.

Soldiers who don't necessarily intend to become recruiters can nevertheless learn a lot about the Army by working as "SRAPs." Additionally, benefits of doing so include the opportunity

to return to their hometowns and collecting a \$2,000 referral bonus.

"There's a monetary incentive, but it's more than that," said Juanita Randle, the SRAP manager at U.S. Army Recruiting Command. "A lot of the Soldiers I put out there didn't know about the bonus. Those I talked to were excited about the opportunity to go home and tell their war stories."

SRAP, which began in 2004, was conceived as a way to bring active-duty veterans of operations Iraqi

Mary Kate Chambers is the associate editor of Recruiter Journal magazine.

◀ SPC Clint Griffin, a Seattle Battalion SRAP, talks to a prospective recruit about the pros and cons of enlisting in the Army.

Freedom and Enduring Freedom back to their hometowns to work with local recruiters. It is different from the Hometown Recruiter Assistance Program in that SRAPs are all OEF or OIF veterans. Participants in the program receive permissive TDY funds.

Erick Hoversholm, a USAREC programs branch chief, said SRAPs bring their real-world war experiences to prospective recruits, lending credibility to what they tell potential enlistees.

Hearing the Army story from a Soldier whose job isn't recruiting makes a difference, especially when that Soldier is from the local area, Hoversholm said.

"When you have someone who can share the Army story, and who already has a good rapport with the community, SRAP works," said Randle.

Maxwell was one of those Soldiers, returning to his hometown in January to work with recruiters in the Maysville, Ky., station. He has deployed to Iraq twice.

During his 14 days as a SRAP, Maxwell gave presentations about the Army to two classes at his former high school, among other duties.

"It was pretty good," he said. "The kids wanted to know everything about everything." Maxwell also talked to students during their lunch breaks and told them about his time in Iraq, as well as about his stateside work with new Soldiers in basic training at Fort Knox, Ky.

"I talked about basic training and One Station Unit Training, and what the days are like," he said. "I showed

pictures of Baghdad on my laptop — shots of free time, friends writing letters and the good side of Iraq." Maxwell also talked about the G.I. Bill and the online education resource eArmyU.

"That's basically what SRAP is all about," said Randle.

Another key to using SRAP well is the Local Recruiting Support System, said Hoversholm. The LRSS database is a Web-based management tool for tracking and planning local marketing events and media placement.

"The battalions enter data into LRSS," Hoversholm said. "Juanita relies on that heavily. And that data's only as good as what the battalions are inputting." Randle matches events that have been entered into the database with a Soldier's hometown.

The intent of LRSS is to help synchronize and maximize resources at the national and local levels. It provides a marketing calendar that displays details of national and local events, and of activities where SRAPs could provide support.

"Planning for specific use of SRAPs at events within a station's area is key to getting the most out of that asset," said COL Don Bartholomew, director of USAREC G5.

A SRAP's level of success is based on the individual SRAP, said Pat Grobschmidt, chief of advertising and public affairs for the Milwaukee Recruiting Battalion.

She also said the majority of recruiters in her battalion are veterans of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. That wasn't the case when SRAP was developed.

Still, Soldiers working as SRAPs can validate what

recruiters say, she said.

Maxwell saw the program as a chance to glance into the life of a recruiter. He was scheduled to report to the Recruiting and Retention School in February, and was encouraged by his command sergeant major to look into SRAP.

"At first I wasn't too optimistic about recruiting duty. But now it's looking pretty good," he said. "These guys have been really helpful."

Going out with a recruiter, listening in on discussions with prospects and seeing how a station operates were valuable, Maxwell said.

He gained an appreciation for the amount of time recruiters must spend on paperwork, and for the inevitable frustrations when problems arise and the recruits they thought they had don't meet all the requirements.

SFC Douglas Mason, station commander in Maysville, said he got good reports from Maxwell's presentations and at least one lead.

"He will be a fine recruiter," Mason said. 📌



Remembering the

Fallen

Story by Milli Alam



THE 24 notes of the military bugle call “Taps” will be echoed worldwide on May 19 by hundreds of volunteer buglers at cemeteries operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Park Service, state veterans’ groups and, overseas, by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

Milli Alam works for the Department of Veterans Affairs’ National Cemetery Administration.



The event, which is in recognition of Armed Forces Day and is called “EchoTaps Worldwide,” is being organized in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs’ National Cemetery Administration and Bugles Across America to honor and remember American veterans.

Organizers also hope the event will stimulate interest among brass players in volunteering to perform Taps at the military funerals of veterans throughout the year.

“Each day America loses about 1,800 of its veterans, primarily those who fought in World War II and Korea,” said Leslie Hampton, a Navy Vietnam veteran and a member of Bugles Across America. “In honor of them and the service they provided, it is important that our nation preserve the tradition of a live bugler to play final military honors.”

During the event players will form a line through each cemetery and perform a cascading version of “Taps.” Brass players of all ages are encouraged to perform at the cemetery of their choice. Schools and other organizations are also invited to participate in the tribute, as performers or support volunteers.

The first large “EchoTaps” event occurred in May 2005, when 674 brass players from 30 states gathered in New York state, lining 42 miles of roads between Woodlawn National Cemetery in Elmira and Bath National Cemetery in Bath.

Playing “Taps” in cascade took nearly three hours from the first note at Woodlawn to the final note at Bath. Later, at the Bath cemetery, all of the volunteer buglers performed “Taps” en masse. The event, which included more than 2,000 volunteers, was recognized by officials of the Guinness Book of World Records as being the largest group of musicians playing one song over the greatest distance.

In 2006 players performed EchoTaps at 52 national cemeteries and state veterans’ cemeteries across the nation on Veterans Day in prepara-


tion for the upcoming 2007 event on May 19.

“The playing of ‘Taps’ is a poignant reminder of the great debt we owe to veterans who have served to secure the blessings of liberty for all Americans,” said William F. Tuerk, VA under secretary for Memorial Affairs and an Army Vietnam-era veteran.

“The National Cemetery Administration is proud to participate with Bugles Across America in this worldwide tribute to the service and sacrifice of America’s veterans on Armed Forces Day,” he said.

EchoTaps Worldwide will include buglers participating at American Battle Monuments Cemeteries overseas, too. One by one, each person will play a rendition of “Taps,” creating an echo around the world of this musical symbol of military honor.

“A live bugler performing ‘Taps’ is an expression of the nation’s appreciation for the service of each veteran,” said Thomas Day, a Marine veteran who founded Bugles Across America in 2000. “With more than 600,000 veterans dying each year, we are always looking for new volunteers to perform this valuable service.

Bugles Across America has produced a documentary about the people and events of the original 2005 EchoTaps. DVD copies are available on www.echotaps.org. Free copies are being provided to VA hospitals, school music programs and television networks to help spread the word about the need for live buglers at military funerals. 

For more information about Bugles Across America and how to sign up to participate in the May event or veterans’ burials, visit www.echotaps.org.



◀ A Bugles Across America volunteer plays Taps on Veterans Day.

Voice

Story by Heike Hasenauer
Photos by David Hempenstall

DR. Michael Trimble, an archaeologist who heads the Curation and Archives Analysis Center for Expertise in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' St. Louis (Mo.) District, has been to Iraq a half-dozen times over the past few years.

Trimble led a U.S.-Iraqi effort to assemble an irrefutable body of forensic evidence against former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, who was accused and eventually convicted of systematically exterminating individuals and groups that opposed his rule. He was hanged in January 2007.

"I want to give his victims voices," Trimble said when he started collect-

◀ Accuracy, thoroughness, meticulous measurements and accurate records are essential to capturing and preserving the data recovered. Here, Trimble (*left*) and colleagues work to plot the precise position of emerging remains.

▼ A scream silenced by death 16 years ago is finally heard as Iraqi remains come to light for the first time since 1991.



for the Victims

ing evidence. “I want to be able to tell the world what happened to Saddam’s victims.”

Two years ago Trimble was asked by officials of the U.S. Justice Department to organize a team to excavate mass graves in Iraq. Soon after, he traveled there with other archaeologists and forensic anthropologists, photographers, collections managers and archivists.

The team also included a legal specialist, to ensure that evidence gathered would hold up in an Iraqi court of law.

Also included were other members of the St. Louis District and personnel from medical institutions, law-enforcement organizations and universities across America.

What ensued was more than a mission to excavate and count victims.

“It was more like a large-scale crime-scene investigation,” Trimble noted. “We developed a system to meticulously exhume these victims, to carefully determine the circumstances and causes of their deaths, and to tie them precisely and indisputably to their origins, whenever possible.

“We wanted to be able to show the entire sequence of events of their deaths — from their homes to their graves,” he added. “The level of detail our team was able to document was so precise that the Justice Department asked us to continue our investigation beyond the original one-time investigation.”

The team exhumed more than skeletons. Often, the remains included clothing and toys, and incredibly



detailed, still-legible identity papers accompanied some of them, Trimble said.

“Originally, I think we saw the victims only as a source of data,” he said. “We saw that we could derive detailed information that could stand up in legal proceedings. As we continued to work, however, we gained a greater respect for these people’s lives.”

Many of the graves contained the skeletons of mothers and children. In one case, a mother was holding her child, perhaps trying to shield him from the hail of bullets that was the last thing they both ever felt.

What prepares people to undertake this kind of work in a far away, hostile place? Trimble said it’s an ability to focus under stress.

“I worked in an emergency room as a teenager and young college student,” he said. “I learned from the first

▲ Former Marine Tommy Lavoti delicately removes materials from around the shoe of a person whose final walk was into a mass grave in the Iraqi desert.

day that you have to remove yourself from the horror of injured and ill people. It wasn’t that you couldn’t be concerned for them. But if you didn’t focus on your work, you could make mistakes that might have very grave consequences.”

It was much like that in Iraq, he said. Getting emotionally involved could cause a failure to follow proper procedures and perhaps fail to correctly document something.

“The Iraqi people — and the world — need to know that the people who did this are not typical of their population but, rather, are terrible aberrations,” Trimble said. 🇺🇸

Taking a Comrade Home

Story by SPC Shane Eschenburg

SIX Soldiers carrying an improvised coffin marched in rhythm, acutely aware of every turn and breath, as they practiced in a quiet corner of an Army facility in Heidelberg, Germany, for an upcoming mission.

They performed the same drill for two weeks, three hours a day, in preparation for their mission to pay final respects to a comrade whose body was to be returned to her home in Uganda.

PFC Lena Karungi, a 21-year-old paralegal specialist who was assigned

to V Corps' Headquarters and HQs. Company, was not killed in combat, but by a train when she unknowingly stepped into its path. SPC Latosha Vines, also of V Corps, was killed in the same incident. Her body was returned to Camden, Ala., where she was buried with full military honors..

Karungi's family wanted Lena's remains returned to Uganda for burial. Their request created a flurry of activity on both sides of the Atlantic.

Born in Uganda, Karungi had moved to Massachusetts as a teenager. She attended community college there and enlisted in the Army following a short stint in the Army Reserve.

V Corps assembled the six-mem-

ber burial detail, as well as chaplain and bugler, prepared passports and TDY orders, and ensured that the Soldiers' dress uniforms were in order and that each Soldier had necessary immunizations. Embassies hustled to pave the way for diplomatic travel from Germany to Entebbe, on Lake Victoria, Uganda's southern border.

Karungi's first-line supervisor, SSG Toyera Brown, escorted the remains to Brussels, Belgium, to rendezvous with the rest of the team for the trip to Uganda.

"We are honoring PFC Karungi. We're taking her home to her family, and showing them what she meant to us as a Soldier, a sister and, above all, a friend," said team member SPC Konrad Nikolao, of V Corps' Office of the Staff Judge Advocate.

Upon touchdown at Entebbe, the jet-lagged group got only a quick glimpse of Uganda as they headed from their plane to a nearby hangar to retrieve the flag-draped coffin. Inside, a tall and somber man identified himself as Karungi's father, Sande Patrick.

"She was such a wonderful girl," Patrick said, as tears welled in his eyes.

As the team headed to the airport terminal once more to follow the body to its first destination, the Soldiers

◀ Flanked by a pair of Ugandan funeral directors bearing photos of PFC Lena Karungi, Chaplain (MAJ) Mark Nordstrom of U.S. Army, Europe, leads the V Corps funeral detail and a procession of mourners to Karungi's gravesite.

SPC Shane Eschenburg works in the V Corps Public Affairs Office.

CW2 Sheila Horgan





were quietly enveloped by the group that had watched their arrival.

“Thank you for bringing our beloved Lena back to Uganda,” said a middle-aged woman. Later the team members learned that she is one of the aunts who raised Karungi after her mother died.

At midnight, the Soldiers boarded U.S. embassy vans for the 45-minute drive to Uganda’s capital, Kampala City.

As they approached the modest house that was their destination, they looked out onto a crowd of Ugandans staring at the small convoy. The team stepped out of the van and into a swirl of African music and more than 200 people who came to honor Karungi and her family.

Silently, the detail fell into formation. Once again, Conner softly called out commands as the team moved the coffin into the house.

Upon arrival the next morn-

▲ Nordstrom salutes as members of the V Corps funeral detail place Karungi’s remains into a hearse following the memorial service in Bukoto.

➤ Sande Patrick, Karungi’s father, cradles the U.S. flag that draped his daughter’s coffin following her burial service in Mbarara.

ing at St. Andrews Church in Bokoto for the first of two services, the detail moved the flag-covered coffin into position next to a waiting priest robed in white and flanked by four bouquets of white flowers.

“She was one of the sweetest girls I have ever met, and she never had a bad thing to say about anyone,”

Brown said. “I loved her like she was my own daughter. She was a beautiful, kind, respectful, smart, humble, outstanding Soldier with truly unlimited potential.”

Representing V Corps, SFC George Abbey of the Corps’ inspector general office stepped forward and solemnly presented Patrick with mementos — an American flag; a sign-in book from Ka-

SPC Shane Eschenburg



▲ Dorothy Kagoro, PFC Lena Karungi’s aunt (right), comforts Karungi’s brother, Shalto, as the pair spend a few moments in private reflection at Karungi’s graveside.



CW2 Sheila Horgan

runge and Vines’s memorial service in Heidelberg; and sympathy cards from comrades and friends.

On the day of the trip home, the Soldiers arrived at the airport early to find hundreds of Banyankole — members of Karungi’s Ankole tribe, which makes up one of Uganda’s four traditional kingdoms — already there. Many wore shirts bearing the private’s picture and the words “We Miss You.” Under a blistering sun, African music echoed through banana trees and across open fields. 🇺🇸

Where Va

Story by Heike Hasenauer

LTC Michael Edrington



PHC Johnny Bivara



Michel du Cille



Valor Rests

TELEVISION viewers have seen many heart-wrenching images of funeral and burial services conducted at Arlington National Cemetery, as a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

According to Kara McCarthy, a spokeswoman for the cemetery, 375 service members killed in the conflicts have been buried in the sprawling facility outside the nation's capital as of March 16.

When a young private or an old general dies, the Caisson Platoon of the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), America's official burial unit, handles the ceremony — from the presentation of the U.S. flag to a spouse or other family member to the gun salute and bugler sounding final “Taps.”

For many families, saying goodbye to their loved ones means doing so in every physical sense; many of the families of service members interred at Arlington live far from Washington, D.C., and can seldom return to visit their loved ones' gravesites, said LTC Michael Edrington.

Edrington works for the superintendent at Arlington, as program director and managing editor of a new book about the cemetery that will be available this month to the families of all service members who were killed on active duty in the war on terror and are buried at Arlington.

The 192-page book contains some 200 “stirring” images that illustrate the four seasons at Arlington, Edrington said. The photos, taken over an 18-month period, were taken by 15 of the nation's best commercial and military photographers and were

SGT Haraz Ghanbari (main photo)





LTC Michael Edrington (left)



PHC Johnny Biviera

culled from a collection of more than 40,000 images.

Two-time Pulitzer-Prize winning author Rick Atkinson penned the book's introductory essay, and director Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks SKG and Paramount Pictures allowed "Hymn to the Fallen," for which they own the commercial rights, to be included in one of two DVDs inserted into the book, Edrington said.

The DVDs also include a rendition of "Taps," outtakes of Arlington National Cemetery images, and a copy of a National Geographic Society-produced television documentary about Arlington.

The commemorative book, "Where Valor Rests — Arlington National Cemetery," is being published by Rich Clarkson and Associates of Denver, Colo., under the auspices of the Arlington National Cemetery Commemorative Project Inc. It will not be for sale, and no profits will be made through its publication, Edrington said. A commercial version of the book will be published in cooperation with the

LTC Michael Edrington





National Geographic Society, which will donate a portion of its profits from book sales to help print any updates to the commemorative version.

"The book is just another expression of gratitude for their loss," Edrington said of the families who will receive copies. "It's also intended to show the care and concern cemetery personnel put into caring for the families' loved ones' graves."



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IN the steep hills around Schweinfurt, Germany, the morning air was cold and damp, and the mud was deep as leaders of 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, carried their heavy rucksacks and weapons — trekking more than 15 miles in six hours over the rugged countryside.

They stopped only at checkpoints to tackle mystery tasks designed by a squadron sergeant major whose taste for training matched his creative ingenuity.

Squadron commander LTC Christopher Kolenda said the march is named after Rudyard Kipling's poem "Gunga Din," which chronicles the life and death of a faithful Indian water boy who served alongside British infantrymen during the 19th century.

Throughout the trek, "though belted and flayed," the 1-91 teams trudged on, just as in Kipling's poem. Their task was simple — make it to the end before their commander did so he'd be obliged to say, "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din."

"If any team finishes before me, they get the title," Kolenda said. "It

SPC Matthis Chiroux works in the U.S. Army, Europe, Public Affairs Office.

comes with a whole lot of bragging rights."

The team-building exercise began before dawn near the unit's headquarters on Conn Barracks, just north of Schweinfurt.

Commanders, first sergeants, platoon sergeants and platoon leaders from each of 1-91's five troops — as well as its command group — had 20 minutes to sketch copies of a map before the original was taken away.

Afterwards, five-ton trucks hauled the six teams of seven Soldiers to start points scattered throughout the countryside.

Once on site, exercise coordinators revealed to the teams that their starting locations were not on their maps, but they were provided an azimuth pointing them in the right direction. After marching a few kilometers, the teams would have to locate their positions on their sketched maps using terrain association.

"There are a lot of unknowns incorporated into this," said the exercise designer, SGM Michael Kennedy. "They don't know where they are going or how long they have to march. They don't know what task is coming

up next. All they know is that they have to get to a point and figure something out, or wait for a mission, just like in a real-world situation."

The course led the Soldiers through forests and muddy fields, down paved roads and across great stretches of damp grass. The partially overcast morning was undeniably beautiful, said SFC Andreas Elliott, an A Troop platoon sergeant, but as his heavy load began to feel heavier, his focus narrowed on the road ahead.

"In the end, we're here to finish," he said. "We're here to show that we can accomplish any task given to us, and the road from here to the end is pulling us together as leaders."

"It was good to get to know everybody and experience the pain of a forced rucksack march," said SFC Justin Brekken, another A Troop platoon sergeant. "There's nothing like a little pain to bring us all together."

In fact, allowing his squadron leaders to bond was one of the main objectives of the exercise, in Kolenda's view.

"We have a lot of new leaders who've just joined us. By putting them together in a situation like this, we're forcing them to communicate, to get to know each other," Kolenda said. "They're learning to work



Vying for "Gu

► Soldiers from A troop identify weapons during a checkpoint mystery task as part of the Gunga Din march.

together to accomplish a mission.”

Such cohesiveness will be crucial to the unit’s success on their upcoming deployment to Iraq, he said, adding that the 1-91 will have a new role as they no longer use Bradley fighting vehicles.

“We haven’t been given dates yet, but we know we’re going to Iraq,” Kolenda said. “This will be our first mission since transforming from the 1st Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt. last June. Many of our missions will be on foot. This training is also preparing us to accomplish a mission that differs from what we’ve traditionally trained for as cavalry. We’ll be up close, this time, face to face with the enemy.”

Besides the Gunga Din trekkers, the squadron’s sniper team also used the event to train. Throughout the day, they watched teams from hiding spots in the woods.

“They’re out there somewhere,” Kennedy said. “They’re trying to observe who’s leading the mission, the types of weapons we’re carrying and anything that would have intelligence value. They’ve already learned some

▼ Soldiers from A Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, cross a field north of Schweinfurt, Germany, during the Gunga Din road march.



valuable lessons today. For example, green camouflage sticks out like a sore thumb in the wood line this time of year.”

Marching Soldiers rarely spotted the snipers, not bad considering the age and experience of the three marksmen, said Kolenda, noting that the trio has yet to attend sniper school.

The snipers were not the only junior Soldiers receiving training with the leadership; one sergeant single-handedly supervised the entire exercise, with a corporal as his assistant.

“This is good experience for them,” Kennedy said. “This happens downrange, every day. Young guys have to step up and be leaders.”

But as no team finished before the 1-91 command group, the title of “Gunga Din” will have to be awarded at a later march. But that wasn’t really the point of the day, Kolenda said.

“I’d like to see my Soldiers get there before me,” he said, “but as long as they’re learning and bonding, I’m happy. I’m proud of them all.”



▲ LTC Christopher Kolenda, commander of 1st Sqdn., leads his command group during the road march.

nga Din”

Story and Photos by SPC Matthis Chiroux



A Unique Partne

Story by 1LT Amanda Straub

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SSG Jo Turner and SPC Cheryl Ivanov are combat medics deployed to Afghanistan with the Oregon National Guard's 41st Brigade Combat Team.

They're attached to the Afghan National Army's 3rd Infantry Kandak, 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps, to provide medical support during the unit's patrols.

Recently, both women earned Combat Medical Badges for their work under fire.

During their second time out on patrol, an improvised explosive device exploded near a truck full of ANA soldiers, Turner said. The soldiers' comrades, in another vehicle in the patrol, loaded the wounded into their truck and sped off.

Most of the men in the truck had been fatally wounded. In fact, only one of the soldiers survived.

When Turner and Ivanov learned that at least one of the other soldiers could have been saved had someone applied a tourniquet, they made clear to the Afghans that their wounded soldiers should receive field medical treatment before being evacuated.

The two medics wept for the fallen soldiers as if they were their own.

"When the ANA soldiers saw us crying in the Humvee, they started to trust us," Turner said. "They knew we really cared about what happened to them. It was a turning point."

1LT Amanda Straub is assigned to the Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V Public Affairs Office in Kabul, Afghanistan.

In another incident, 3rd Kandak soldiers on patrol were ambushed by insurgents firing rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

Turner drove her Humvee into the firefight with SSG Arthur Perez manning the crew-served weapon in the turret. ANA soldiers gained even more respect for the female medics when they saw that Turner wasn't afraid and didn't hesitate to care for her comrades during the fight.

When it comes to the dangers of combat, Turner and Ivanov try to be realistic. They know they are putting themselves in danger every time they accompany the ANA on a mission in the volatile pass between Khost and Gardez. They trust their training and they trust the soldiers around them to do everything they can to ensure their safety, they said.

Despite the hazards, Turner and Ivanov said that accompanying the ANA on field missions is a rewarding experience. "It's what we've been trained to do," Ivanov said. 🇺🇸

[Since this article was written, the two women have left Afghanistan; Ivanov's husband, PFC Ognian Ivanov, who was also deployed to Afghanistan with the 41st BCT, was wounded by a grenade and Cheryl escorted him to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany for treatment. Turner was able to use her leave to accompany the Ivanovs and provide her support.]

◀ SPC Cheryl Ivanov (left) and SSG Jo Turner, both medics attached to a unit of the Afghan National Army, hand out school supplies to local children.

▶ Ivanov poses with ANA soldiers and Afghan National Police.



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JPADS IMPROVES AERIAL DROPS TO SOLDIERS

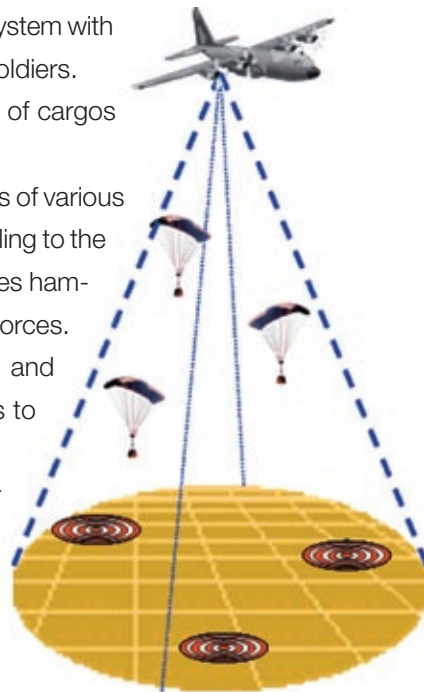
U.S. Joint Forces Command continues to develop the Joint Precision Airdrop System with new ways of delivering supplies to ground forces while minimizing risks to Soldiers. A joint military utility assessment team recently observed and rated airdrops of cargos of 6,000 to 10,000 pounds at Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz.

Before the development of JPADS, air crews delivered supplies and vehicles of various weights at low altitudes, putting aircrews at additional risk and potentially revealing to the enemy the location of friendly ground forces. Loads dropped at higher altitudes hampered accuracy and reduced the probability of supplies getting to intended forces.

The improved JPADS dramatically decreases this risk for the aircrews and aircraft. Each delivery is at a higher altitude and allows up to 10,000 pounds to be dropped.

With the increase in payload capability and drop-position accuracy, fewer aircrews are needed to make drops. Also, Soldiers spend less time recovering the dropped payloads.

JPADS includes a mission-planner system and a GPS retransmission kit that aids in developing the aircraft's flight path, thus ensuring that supplies reach their intended targets. — *Army News Service*



WOUNDED SOLDIER AND FAMILY HOTLINE

THE Army has a new 24-hour Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline at (800) 984-8523 (see page 3).

The hotline's call center offers wounded and injured Soldiers and their family members a way to seek help to resolve medical issues. It also transmits Soldiers' medical-related concerns directly to senior Army leaders so they can improve the way the Army fulfills the medical needs of Soldiers and their families.

— *ARNEWS*



\$1.18 MILLION DONATED TO WOUNDED

FINANCIAL strain has been eased for families of more than 2,200 wounded service members, thanks to the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.



CSAH's Gift Check Program has provided \$500 gift checks to more than 2,000 families from funds from private and corporate donors. The gift check program is part of the organization's Emergency Financial Relief Program.

CSAH's mission is to help families meet their financial, emotional and physical needs. The non-partisan, non-profit organization offers several programs to assist disabled veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and their families. — *ARNEWS*



For more information on CSAH, visit www.saluteheroes.org.

PEO SOLDIER FIELDS TWO NEW SYSTEMS

THE Army's Program Executive Office-Soldier recently performed a field assessment of the Fire-Resistant Environment Ensemble, a fire-resistant, cold-weather system for aviators and armor personnel. The evaluation was conducted at Camp Humphreys and Camp Casey, Korea.

The Extended Cold Weather Clothing System is a seven-layer system of 12 individual components, with a functional temperature range of 50 degrees Fahrenheit. It provides greater survivability for the wearer, enhances mission performance and allows Soldiers to sustain combat operations by outlasting enemy forces in cold weather.

The system was fielded to the 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan and received rave reviews.

The result of the Korea tests will be a multi-layered, versatile insulating system that allows combat-vehicle crewmen and aircrews to adapt to varying mission requirements and environmental conditions.

Additional information on PEO-Soldier and Soldier equipment can be found at www.peosoldier.army.mil. — ARNEWS



ARMY LAUNCHES VIRTUAL ARMY EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

THE Army has launched the Virtual Army Experience, a high-tech, team-based exhibit designed to immerse visitors in the operational roles of Soldiers.

The interactive exhibit brings the Army's popular computer game, America's Army: Special Forces (Overmatch), to a life-size networked world to provide visitors with a virtual "test drive" of soldiering. Participants employ teamwork, leadership and high-tech equipment as they take part in a hands-on virtual mission to capture a terrorist leader.

At the joint operations center participants receive an intelligence, force protection, signal, support and current situation briefing to prepare them to enter a virtual combat operation. Participants then enter the mission simulator area, where they execute a simulated operation in the war on terrorism.

During 2007 the Army will deploy the Virtual Army Experience to 35 events around the nation. The schedule is available at www.americasarmy.com and www.goarmy.com. — ARNEWS

NEW CLAIM COMPENSATION FORM

THE Defense Department has made it easier for combat-injured veterans to apply for compensation for their injuries.

After receiving feedback from all branches of the service and from many retired veterans, Combat-Related Special, the organization that handles claims, has revised its claim form. The new form makes it easier to understand who is eligible for CRSC, and specifies what information veterans should provide in order to receive compensation.

CRSC helps 20-year military retirees by providing a monthly tax-free compensation that supplements Department of Veterans Affairs disability and military retirement payments. Retired veterans who have a 10 percent or greater VA disability rating must prove that the disability is combat-related.

— ARNEWS



Veterans can call the CRSC Service Center at (866) 281-3254 or e-mail www.crsc.info@us.army.mil.

AMC GAINS NEW MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMAND

THE Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command recently became a major subordinate command of the U.S. Army Materiel Command, headquartered at Fort Belvoir, Va.

The Army designated its three large, four-star commands — Forces Command, Training and Doctrine Command, and AMC — as “Army commands.” This reorganization also eliminated the phrase “major Army command,” or “MACOM,” and moved several of the former MACOMs that once reported directly to Department of the Army under these three large Army commands.

SDDC is the Army service-component command to U.S. Transportation Command, providing USTRANSCOM with air, sea and surface capability to move Defense Department assets worldwide. — ARNEWS



For more information on SDDC, visit www.sddc.army.mil.

PROTECT YOUR COMPUTER AND PERSONAL DATA

AS the Defense Finance and Accounting Service continues to protect individuals’ financial information on MyPay, DFAS wants to remind customers to protect their personal information from scams and identity theft.

MyPay uses tailored security features to protect both data files and the transmission of information to users’ computers.

Scam artists trick people into parting with personal information by luring them to questionable Web sites, or by using fraudulent e-mails to request users’ personal information.

Customers should protect data not only when using MyPay, but when conducting any financial transactions

via the computer.

Customers should install operating-system and application software updates regularly, and should install

and use anti-virus software and personal firewalls. The Department of Defense Computer Emergency Readiness Team makes this type of software available to most DOD employees. Customers should not store their various user IDs and passwords in files on their computers.

E-mail is not a secure method of transmitting personal information. If you initiate a transaction and want to provide your personal and financial information through a Web site, look for indicators that the site is secure. — ARNEWS



PREVENTING HELICOPTER INCIDENTS

THE Army is investigating recent helicopter crashes in Iraq in order to determine their cause and share lessons learned with aircrews as quickly as possible.

The service also is stepping up efforts to identify and confront the forces behind the attacks, Army officials said.

Fragments recovered from a crash site are analyzed to determine what type of enemy weapon hit the aircraft. The information provides valuable clues into how the enemy is operating and what the Army needs to do about it, officials said.

At the Army's Aviation Center and School at Fort Rucker, Ala., a team of tacticians regularly assesses lessons learned from the field, and disseminates them through the school and combat theaters.

Lessons also are shared among the services to ensure all aviators operating in the theater have the benefit of the latest safety information.

— ARNEWS



NEW 529 SAVINGS PLAN

THE Military Officers Association of America now offers the Vanguard 529 College Savings Plan to officers and enlisted members to provide them a low-cost way to save for a child's or grandchild's college education.

The Vanguard 529 Plan is one the lowest-cost 529 savings plans available today. Service personnel and MOAA members who enroll online and establish an automatic-contribution plan can start with a \$50 minimum payment. If the automatic plan is not chosen, the minimum investment is \$3,000.

Investments in The Vanguard 529 Plan can be used to pay for an education at state and private colleges, universities and other educational institutions. Withdrawals from the plan are free from federal income taxes, when used for higher education.

Certain states also allow contributions to The Vanguard 529 Plan to be deducted from state income taxes. MOAA members in Pennsylvania, Maine and Kansas can take advantage of this benefit.

The plan offers three age-based portfolios, which automatically adjust asset allocations among stocks, bonds and short-term reserves as a child approaches college age.

For those who prefer to construct their own savings strategy, 19 individual portfolios, including broad-based, low-cost index funds, also are available. — MOAA



Enroll or learn more online at
www.moaa.org.

SOLDIERS MAGAZINE HAS MOVED

SOLDIERS magazine has relocated from Fort Belvoir, Va., to Arlington, Va., and is now part of the Army's Soldiers Media Center.

We are always in need of a good story and high-resolution, 300 dpi jpeg pictures.

Our new mailing address is:

Soldiers Magazine
HQ, Soldiers Media Center
Box 31
2511 Jefferson Davis Hwy.
Arlington, Va 22202-3900



Soldiers
The Official U.S. Army Magazine

To contact the staff, phone (703) 602-8164 or send e-mail to soldiers.magazine@smc.army.mil. — Soldiers magazine

Combatting Predatory Lending



MANY Soldiers have experienced cash-flow problems that seem to peak just before payday, and for some the short-term answer to their money problems has been a so-called “payday loan.” Since many borrowers are unable to repay the loans within the specified period, the already high interest rates escalate dramatically with each passing due date. The result often is Soldiers who are perpetually in debt to dubious lenders.

On Sept. 30, 2006, Congress addressed the problem of predatory lending practices aimed at military personnel by passing the Military Personnel Financial Services Protection Act. The legislation curtails unreasonable credit-interest rates paid by military personnel, limiting annual percentage rates to 36 percent, and establishes mandatory requirements

for the sale of insurance and investment-advisor services on military installations worldwide.

Defining the Problem


People who take out “payday loans” because they are hard-pressed for ready cash sign away their future paychecks for high-interest-rate loans, then often find they are





Steven Chucala is chief of client services in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate at Fort Belvoir, Va.


unable to pay back the loans. This can result in interest-rate escalations that in some cases can soar to more than 100 percent. It is unclear how many Soldiers and other service members have been harmed by this unethical practice, but the number of complaints ultimately prompted Congress to act.


The Military Personnel Financial Services Protection Act:

 Applies to transactions involving the extension of consumer credit to a service member or a dependent.

 Applies to all payday loans, as well as to any loan to which the Truth in Lending Act applies — this includes tax refund anticipation loans, credit-card agreements and similar transactions.

 Does not apply to residential mortgages and loans for the purpose of purchasing personal property that secures the loan (though installment loans for furniture, cars, homes, boats and jewelry, and credit-card agreements that include taking a security interest in the purchased property are exempt).

 Does not apply to service members called to active duty for a specified period that is 30 days or less, or to National Guard and Reserve members not on active duty.

 Limits interest rates to no greater than 36 percent annual percentage rate (APR).



Violations of the statute are punishable as misdemeanors, and contracts that violate the statute are considered void from their inception.

Results?

Although the Military Personnel Financial Services Protection Act seeks to curtail unreasonable interest rates, it does not eliminate the underlying reasons why people take out payday loans. Since most borrowers are financially distressed, have poor credit ratings and are not likely to qualify for low-interest loans from commercial banks or credit unions, it remains to be seen if limiting the APR to 36 percent will help military personnel or place them in worse debt.

The sure way to end predatory lending is for potential borrowers to avoid spending above their needs and to resist taking out loans they will be unable to repay as promised.



▼ Nisei Soldiers proudly bear the nation's flag at a 1944 graduation exercise at the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Fort Snelling, Minn.



Remembering the “Yankee Samurai”

Story by Dr. James C. McNaughton

THE enemy came from a non-Western culture, unfamiliar to most Americans, and spoke a language that few Americans could understand. The enemy was Japanese, and the year was 1941. Anthropologist Ruth Benedict later claimed that “the Japanese were the most alien enemy the United States had ever fought in an all-out struggle.”

In December 1941 Japan attacked American forces in Hawaii and the Philippines. America was thrust into a war not of its choosing, and one for which it was ill-prepared. In particular, the Army lagged in the field of intelligence. A handful of officers had studied Japanese, but the Army would eventually need thousands of linguists to interrogate prisoners of war and translate captured documents.

Army leaders knew that accurate and timely intelligence would be vital to saving American lives, attaining victory and conducting post-conflict operations.

To meet this requirement, the

Army turned to a secret weapon — second-generation Japanese Americans called Nisei (NEE-say). The first group of 60 Nisei Soldiers began language training at the Presidio of San Francisco in November 1941, just weeks before war began.

The Pearl Harbor attack made it difficult for the Army to use Nisei for sensitive intelligence-gathering assignments. The attack inflamed suspicions against anyone of Japanese ancestry, even the Nisei, who were U.S. citizens, born and raised in America.

In Hawaii the Army declared martial law and imposed tight surveillance of the Japanese community. On the West Coast the Army took a different approach. Citing the potential for espionage or sabotage, the Western Defense Command uprooted all individuals of Japanese ancestry, whatever their citizenship. More than 110,000 men, women and children were herded into hastily built internment camps in remote desert locations.

Undeterred, Army intelligence officers continued to recruit Nisei for language training. These Nisei linguists combined the best of both sides of their heritage, calling themselves “Yankee Samurai.” In fact, their American upbringing so outweighed their Japanese heritage that few spoke much Japanese. Most required lengthy training to become proficient.

In 1942 the Military Intelligence Service Language School moved from San Francisco, Calif., to Camp Savage, near Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn. There it grew rapidly to meet expanding language requirements, as

▼ An instructor looks on as Soldiers in a Japanese language class at Camp Savage take an exam.



Dr. James C. McNaughton is command historian for U.S. European Command in Stuttgart, Germany, and author of the recently published book, “Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II.” The book is available through the Army Publications System.

► Nisei linguists with the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps pose for a group photo before deploying to Japan in 1945 to support the occupation forces.



America's armed forces advanced on a wide front, from the South Pacific to the Aleutians. This was the Army's first experience in training military linguists on a large scale. Burgeoning enrollment forced the school to move to nearby Fort Snelling, Minn., in 1944.

The school graduated nearly 6,000 Soldiers during the war. Most were Nisei, including dozens of Nisei female volunteers for the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps.

Nisei linguists were assigned to the Military Intelligence Service, the forerunner of today's U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command. Typical duties included translation, interrogation, radio monitoring and psychological warfare.

As the war progressed, commanders grew increasingly reliant on the Nisei. Each division was usually assigned a language team with 10 Nisei. Other Nisei served with corps and higher headquarters or staffed theater-level intelligence centers in Hawaii, Australia, India and the continental United States.

In China, Burma and India they served with British and Chinese forces, Merrill's Marauders and the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of today's Central Intelligence Agency. Others served in air intelligence with the Army Air Forces. Dozens were wounded or killed in action.

Secrecy was key to preventing the Japanese from learning how easily the U.S. Army was obtaining intelligence. Better-known to the public were other Nisei Soldiers who fought in Italy and France with the 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team; they were immortalized in the popular movie "Go For Broke!" These Nisei were eventually awarded 21 Medals of Honor, a record for a unit of its size.

Nisei linguists also served with valor, often on the front lines. SGT

Hoichi Kubo, from Hawaii, fought in four combat operations with the 27th Infantry Division. On Saipan, while interrogating a prisoner, he learned of the exact timing for the final Japanese banzai attack and passed the information to higher headquarters. When the attack came that night, the American lines held. More than 4,000 Japanese soldiers died, along with 400 Americans, but the battle had been won.

Kubo later learned that several die-hard Japanese soldiers were holding 100 Japanese civilians hostage in a cave. He climbed into the cave armed only with a .45-cal. pistol and persuaded the soldiers to release their hostages and surrender. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for this act of bravery.

Another Nisei linguist, SGT George I. Nakamura from Santa Cruz, Calif., served with the 6th Inf. Div. language team in New Guinea and the Philippines. When people asked why a Japanese American was serving in the U.S. Army, he patiently said, "My folks have been in America for 35 years and I'm an American, born, educated and indoctrinated with American ideals."

Nakamura was killed in the closing weeks of the war, while trying to persuade a small group of Japanese soldiers to surrender. He was awarded the Silver Star, posthumously, and today Nakamura Hall at the Defense



◄ Two Nisei interpreters and an intelligence officer interrogate a Japanese POW (right) in Papua New Guinea.

At the end of the war a G.I. told a reporter, “Only God knows how many of us are alive today because we had these marvelous guys with us.”

Language Institute Foreign Language Center honors his legacy.

At the end of the war a G.I. told a reporter, “Only God knows how many of us are alive today because we had these marvelous guys with us.” GEN Douglas MacArthur’s chief of intelligence declared that the Nisei’s service, “from an intelligence point of view, represented the greatest single contribution to the Pacific war.” Were it not for the Nisei, he said, the war would have lasted at least two years longer.

When Japan surrendered in 1945 the Army needed the Nisei linguists more than ever. Many Americans feared the great distance between the two cultures would doom the oc-


cupation to failure. Instead the Army deployed thousands of Nisei soldiers who understood the Japanese language and culture. They fanned out across Japan with the occupation forces and arranged local surrenders.

In fact, they helped with all aspects of military government, including demobilization, war-crimes trials, censorship of the Japanese press and counterintelligence.

The Nisei linguists made their greatest contribution as a bridge between the two countries during the occupation of Japan and continued to serve in Japan, on active duty or as Department of the Army civilians, even after the occupation ended in

1951, helping cement an alliance that has endured more than 60 years.

The end of the war did not spell the end of the language school. In 1946 the school moved to the Presidio of Monterey, Calif., where it expanded to teach dozens of languages, from Arabic to Russian.

The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, as it’s known today, trains linguists from all military services and federal agencies. Its graduates are serving with distinction in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world. 

▼ A Nisei sergeant (*right*) interprets during surrender negotiations in the Ryukyu Islands in October 1945.



IOWA SOLDIERS AT MARINE OUTPOST

Ar Rutbah, Iraq ▶

WHEN a convoy of 150 contractor-driven trucks and trailers, escorted by about 30 convoy-protection vehicles from the 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry, rolls into the Marine Corps outpost Camp Korean Village, the Soldiers know they will be taken care of.

Once they reach this base, they will find housing, food and experienced mechanics to work on their vehicles, and even a post exchange. This is made possible by a small contingent from the battalion commanded by 1LT Chris Klink.

Mechanics compose the busiest section of Klink's contingent. Upon arrival, each escort vehicle is inspected by the mechanics.

SGT Steven Long, a mechanic, said that his work day can vary from four to five hours to 24 hours.

Klink's Soldiers also provide intelligence debriefs to convoys, and guards to ensure that the drivers don't wander on the base.

Klink also has assigned one of his Soldiers to the base's command operations center. This allows this Soldier to be in direct contact with the Marines for medical-evacuation operations and the removal of explosive ordnance.

The base also has a regional airfield and shock-trauma hospital.

— SFC Clinton Wood, 1/34 BCT PAO



SGT Gary Witte

▶ SPC Carlos Puente, 25, of Iowa Falls, Iowa, and SPC Eric W. Reeves, 22, of Riverton, Iowa, check the identification of a civilian truck driver before allowing him in the convoy. Puente and Reeves serve as drivers and gunners for 2nd Squad, 1st Platoon, C Company, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment.



Gary L. Kleffer

POLISH LEADERS VISIT JMRC

Hohenfels, Germany ◀

SENIOR Polish military leaders recently visited some 500 of their soldiers who were training at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in preparation for the Polish troops' first deployment to Afghanistan.

"In support of democracy, we offer ourselves to be part of this mission," said Polish Minister of Defense Radek Sikorski.

The mostly urban-operations training prepared the Poles for a NATO-led International-Security-Assistance-Force mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The force consists of about 32,000 troops from 37 countries.

"The assessment from trainers on the ground has been that the Polish troops are very aggressive and well-trained," said GEN David McKiernan, commander U.S. Army, Europe.

"More than 90 percent of the American trainers were combat veterans. There are also Polish trainers, all of whom attended our Warrior Leaders Course in Grafenwöhr, Germany," McKiernan said, adding that instructors are applying lessons they learned under fire.

This training marks the first time one non-U.S. military group has trained at JMRC without other NATO partners joining in.

— SGT Aimee Millham, USAREUR PAO

TRAINING DEPLOYING CITIZEN-SOLDIERS

Fort Drum, N.Y. ►

ARMY Reserve and National Guard Soldiers returning to Fort Drum, N.Y., from duty in Iraq and Afghanistan have a new way to continue their service in uniform.

To ease the transition of part-time Soldiers to full-time warriors, Fort Drum's 174th Infantry Brigade, part of First Army, is one of 16 Army training brigades to take in returning reserve-component Soldiers and use their experiences to prepare others for the rigors of combat.

Operation Warrior Trainer is a program developed by First Army, the command that mobilizes and trains reserve-component Soldiers for deployment to combat. OWT places combat veterans into the early stages of the training cycle of newly mobilized Reservists.

The brigade has 10 OWT volunteers from a variety of military specialties currently assigned to support mobilization training. The unit expects to have 50 OWT Soldiers by next October.

Due to their experiences during the process to mobilize, train, deploy and then return from combat,

Ben Abel



reserve-component Soldiers participating in OWT add an understanding of the challenges faced by mobilizing Reserve and National Guard Soldiers.

OWT volunteers will assist with convoy live-fire training, and react-to-contact drills and techniques.

— Ben Abel, Fort Drum, N.Y. Public Affairs

ALASKA GUARD TROOPS CONDUCT MISSILE DEFENSE MISSION

Fort Greely, Alaska ▼

MEMBERS of the Alaska Army National Guard's 49th Missile Defense Battalion serve at the epicenter of the U.S.'s Ground-Based Midcourse Defense program.

William D. Moss



▲ SPC Juan Coronel (left) and SGT Michael Picirillo, members of the Alaska Army National Guard's 49th Missile Defense Battalion, prepare to set out on a patrol of the perimeter of the Missile Defense Complex at Fort Greely. The complex is home to 11 ground-based interceptor missiles.

Eleven ground-based interceptor missiles housed in underground silos at Fort Greely, Alaska, are a key part of a multi-layered defense system protecting the United States from a ballistic missile attack. These interceptors, and two more at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., would destroy incoming missiles at the "midcourse phase," outside the earth's atmosphere.

In the event of an attack, members of the Alaska Guard would use sophisticated surveillance and radar systems to track the missile through its initial boost phase, said MAJ Joe Miley, the unit's operations officer. If the missile reached the midcourse phase, the Guard Soldiers would await the order to engage it.

"The National Guard has traditionally been responsible for homeland defense," Miley said. "And this is the epitome of homeland defense."

The unit is a cross-section of America, and all its members applied for three-year, Active Guard and Reserve assignments with the program, Miley said.

"We were on high alert, and we were ready for it," he said of a recent defense drill. "All the crews had done thousands of hours of simulations, in addition to training, and they were ready to act if it had turned out to be a threat."

— Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service



Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, practice entering a house before they join in an early morning combined air and ground assault with Iraqi army troops in Mosul, Iraq.

— Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Lock, USAF



Sharp Shooters





(Clockwise, from top left)

Members of the Fort Gordon, Ga., Youth Challenge Academy march to a drill team competition in the Reckord Armory at the University of Maryland at College Park, Md. About 63,000 former high school dropouts have graduated from the award-winning National Guard Youth Challenge Program.

— SGT Jim Greenhill

Black Hawk helicopter gunner CPL Christopher Mawhirt-er of 3rd Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, looks out over the Tigris River during a mission near Baghdad, Iraq.

— Tech. Sgt. Russell E. Cooley IV, USAF

SGT Daniel Delaney of the 95th Fire Fighting Detachment from Fort Drum, N.Y., stands by as a fire burns during the mass-casualty exercise held at Mubarak Military City, Egypt, during Exercise Bright Star.

— Staff Sgt. Patricia Bunting, USAF

A member of the National Guard's 1st Battalion, 293rd Infantry Regiment, 76th Brigade Combat Team, aims his weapon during an early morning exercise at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Indiana.

— SGT Jim Greenhill



Sharpshooters Submissions

Mail photo submissions for Sharp Shooters to:
**Photo Editor, Soldiers
Soldiers Media Center
Box 31
2511 Jefferson Davis Hwy
Arlington, VA 22202-3900**
Digital images should be directed to:
soldiers.magazine@smc.army.mil.
All submissions must include an introductory paragraph and captions.



BASEBALL HISTORY

at Fort Sill

Story by Jini Ryan

Photos by Kristin Miller

THE hurler throws the pitch, the striker takes a swing, and the game is on as Soldiers are pitted against American Indian players on the baseball diamond — much as they were in the 1800s.

Each year Fort Sill, Okla., commemorates those 19th-century ball games with re-enactments that bring descendants of the original American Indian baseball teams to the diamond to take on Soldiers.

Recently, the Fort Sill Indians faced the Cannonballs, a group of second lieutenants from Fort Sill's Field Artillery School.

Indians' shortstop David Wermey said tribesmen of different

Jini Ryan works in the U.S. Army Environmental Center Public Affairs Office.



▲ The "Cannonballs," in white and red (second lieutenants from the U.S. Army Field Artillery School), and the "Indians," in blue, (primarily descendants of American Indians once stationed at Fort Sill), take up their bats for a re-enactment of baseball games dating to the mid-1800s.

ages enjoy participating in the event for various reasons.

Fort Sill Museum Director Towana Spivey said David Wermey and other tribesmen follow in the footsteps of such famous tribal warriors as Geronimo, the Apache leader buried at Fort Sill, when they come to play the game.

"Members of the Indian team in the 19th century were frequently prisoners of war who were enlisted as Soldiers in the American Army," Spivey said.

From January through March 1869, Soldiers with the 7th Cavalry, under the command of LTC George A. Custer, played ball with the 19th Kansas Volunteers, American Indian fighters recruited for six months. By the end of March, the handmade ball began to unravel, and it was also time for the temporarily enlisted Kansas Soldiers to return home.

The Indians forfeited going on the warpath before the reservation period to play ball and serve in the Army.

On the present-day ball field, everything about the game is straight out of Fort Sill's past — the uniforms, the ball, even the rules.

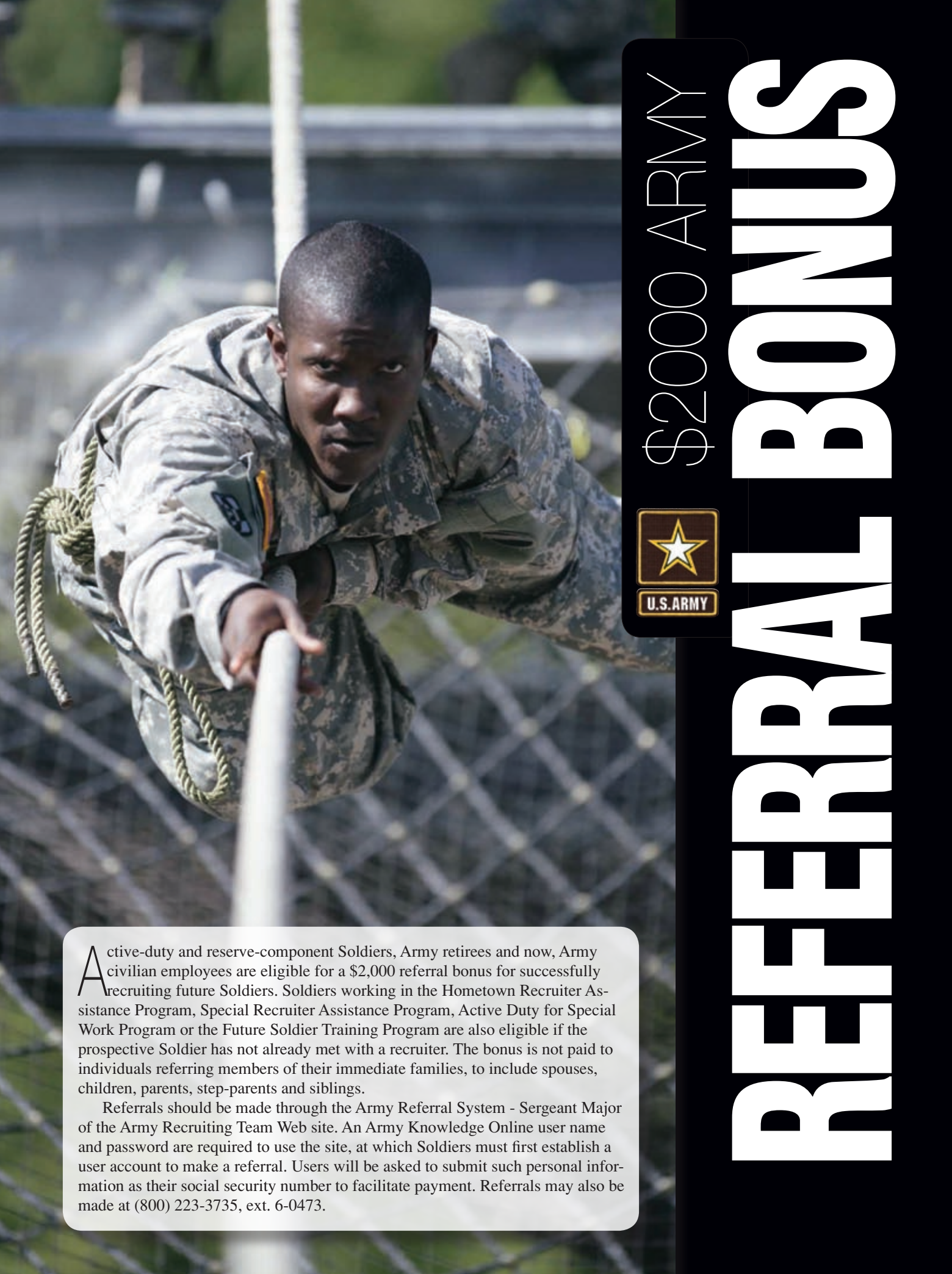
In the 19th century, baseball's rules, terms and equipment were still evolving. Pitchers were called hurlers, batsmen were strikers and players were ballists.

When crossing home plate, team members had to ring a bell and shout: "Tally one point, sir," to score a run. When the fans, or the "cranks" and "crankettes," as they were called, got a little rowdy, the umpire could fine them 25 cents for ungentelemanly behavior, Spivey said.

For the second lieutenants who took to the field, the game is a way to give back to the community, said 2LT Brunson DePass, captain of the Cannonballs. "It's the story of our national pastime tied to Indian and Army history come to life on the Fort Sill 'Field of Dreams.'" 🏆



▲ Teams had to ring a bell and shout "Tally one point, sir," in order to score the run.



\$2000 ARMY



REFERRAL BONUS

Active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers, Army retirees and now, Army civilian employees are eligible for a \$2,000 referral bonus for successfully recruiting future Soldiers. Soldiers working in the Hometown Recruiter Assistance Program, Special Recruiter Assistance Program, Active Duty for Special Work Program or the Future Soldier Training Program are also eligible if the prospective Soldier has not already met with a recruiter. The bonus is not paid to individuals referring members of their immediate families, to include spouses, children, parents, step-parents and siblings.

Referrals should be made through the Army Referral System - Sergeant Major of the Army Recruiting Team Web site. An Army Knowledge Online user name and password are required to use the site, at which Soldiers must first establish a user account to make a referral. Users will be asked to submit such personal information as their social security number to facilitate payment. Referrals may also be made at (800) 223-3735, ext. 6-0473.



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Specialist Carlos Villarreal

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